

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, February 9. 1655.

Quest. 1. **I** Give you the trouble of these lines, only to beg the favour of you, to let me know by your publick Mercury, your answer to the following question, viz. Whether by the Laws of God or this Nation it is forbidden to Cousin Germans to marry; and if it be, whether it may not alter the case, where the parents are but of half blood?

Ans. This marrying and giving in marriage, is such a thing and there's so many persons irregular in their choice, who continually perplex us with their doubts, that we have some hundred questions at least upon this very point; all of which querists, as well as this, we refer to our former papers; wherein they'll find a full account of our opinion upon the matter.

Quest. 2. How far did St. Thomas, Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus agree with St. Augustine, about free will and predestination?

Ans. The Thomists hold that man has such an absolute dependance upon God, that by his will he can neither produce any act, or incline to any thing whatever, except God predetermine him to it, as a physical cause which moves and applies every agent to the action, by intimately and efficaciously operating in him. Luther who had studied the divinity of Thomas Aquinas, according to the custom of that time, embraced this doctrine with many others, which had no relation to those he disputed with the Roman Church; And being naturally of an impetuous and open temper, he expressed himself more freely, and with less precaution upon these matters than other Divines had done. He solely attributed to God both Good and Evil, denying that man had any free will at all, or that he could hinder himself from being carry'd to the Good or Evil to which God inclined him. Believing that man pursued Evil through the necessary inclination of his will enslaved to sin, to which he was predetermined by the Divine power, and that when he was inclined to good he only followed the irresistible impression of grace, which impell'd him, even as we do an inanimate body, without his contributing any thing to it whatever. In the works of Luther we may read the sense of these words, That God is the total cause of our good and bad works; that man has had no free will ever since Adam's fall, that free will is like an inanimate instrument, which effects nothing; that God converted only whom he pleased, and even converted them whether they would or no. Calvin who followed Luther very near, and lookt upon his doctrine to be conformable to that of St. Augustine, agreed with him in it, altho he did not always express himself like him. 'Tis true the disciples of St. Augustine warmly maintain'd that Luther and Calvin were very far from being of their Master's opinion; but 'tis plain the reason of it was, because their adversaries have taken a great deal of pains to diminish the authority of St. Augustine, and make his Disciples odious, by accusing them to be of the same opinion with the Protestants. But Erasmus who, we cannot believe, was ignorant of St. Augustine's true opinion, in a little treatise he writ against Luther, joyns them together in this, believing they carry'd their opinion to this extremity, purely to oppose that of Pelagius. And he himself took a mean, which somewhat agreed with the semi-Pelagians, he lookt upon the beginning and end of Regeneration as pure effects of grace, but maintain'd it was not in our power to abuse it, and that in the progress of sanctification Free Will co-operated with God, not as principal cause; but as a cause submitted to the first.

Quest. 3. I would intreat you, to resolve me this question, Whether God brings Judgments upon the Children for their parents sins? for we read in the second Commandment, that the Lord is a Jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers, upon the Children unto the third and fourth generation; and in Ezekiel that the fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on Edge.

Ans. We have innumerable instances of the temporal afflictions that children have met with for their parents crimes, which, without a reformation in them are often entail'd on many generations. And sometimes the examples of parents so far influence their children, that they become partakers of the same guilt; but except they themselves do evil they may be assured they shall not suffer after this life, since we are expressly told, every man shall answer for his own sins.

Quest. 4. I have an account to make up with a Gentleman (who was an only instrument to bring me to land a sum of money to a man, who since is broke, and my debt lost;) Now in my making up my account with him, I can save half the debt and loss (that he was instrumental of bringing me into,) and himself altogether ignorant of it; I do think he is under some obligation of bearing part of the loss; the which if I discover to him; I am sure he'll not allow it, or any part; Qu. Whether I may thus, partly, right my self (unknown to him) with an honest and safe Conscience? Favour me with your speedy answer because the account will soon be settled between us.

Ans. Yes, you may take this method with as good a conscience as you can pick his pocket, such a trick being a down-right cheat.

Quest. 5. Having good information that several shopkeepers, who are reputed and do pass for honest men in this City of London, have and daily do change Guinea's (picking out the Broadest money they have by them) for such, as they are (it's rational to Judge) very well satisfied are Clippers of the current money of this Kingdom. I desire your opinion Gentlemen, whether such as these are not really to be esteemed as bad Rogues, as those that do abuse the current money of this Nation at such a rate as we daily see it to be?

Ans. Indeed we look upon them who thus encourage such persons, to be as great villains and enemies to the Commonwealth as the Clippers themselves, if not greater; since they are the principals: For without such abettors the other could not effect it; and any person that is assured of it, would do well privately to advise 'em to desist, but if afterwards they still continue the same practice they will do as well to let the Town know who they are thus obliged to.

Quest. 6. Was Bdellium, a precious stone, or a fruit, or what was it conjectur'd to be?

Ans. Salmasius lookt upon it to be both the name of an Aromatic Gum of Judea, and also of a fruit which grew in Arabia. Most authors agree that there are two kinds of Bdellium which bear the name of Judaick, and some even affirm there are many. Salmasius further thought that Bdellium was derived from the Hebrew word Bedollach, which we meet with in Gen. 2. 12. and believed it denoted some spice, and not a pearl as many of the Rabbins have concluded. He says

lays that the Land of *Havilah* from whence *Bdelium* is said to come might be a Country of the *Indies*, or of *Arabia*, because there had been people who dwelt both in the *Indies* and in *Arabia* whose name came very near this word, from both which Countries they carryed Gold and *Bdelium*. *Numbers* 11. 7. does in some sort confirm this thought about the signification of the word *Bdelium*; for 'tis there said, that the *Manna* was as *Cinnamon* seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of *Bdelium*.

Quest. 6. What condition in the world is most eligible, and best for the assisting us to be virtuous, and to become wise?

Ans. The wise man was for neither riches nor poverty, because both estates were so liable to temptation; and the middle condition is undoubtedly most proper for the acquisition of virtue, wisdom or riches; since the inconveniencies both of the body and fortune are hinderances in our pursuit after either; for even to have a desire to become knowing, 'tis requisite to have a generous and liberal mind; and not a mean spirit like that of a poor man, who being loaden with misery thinks of nothing, but how to live, and deliver himself from the insupportable rigours of necessity: And so far is poverty from being an help to virtue that it oft-times makes men despise Laws, and through their misery abandon themselves to rage and despair, and in hopes of some redress, they become mutinous, seditious, and guilty of thefts, murders, and all manner of outrages, having nothing to lose but their unhappy lives, by venturing of which they expect to gain some little change in their fortune, which may possibly contribute more to their ease and quiet. And as for the rich man, our Saviour tells us 'tis easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle than for such an one to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The fullness of his condition affording him so many diversions from his Duty, that 'tis almost impossible for him, to find the path of virtue; and therefore we often see riches attended with vanity, luxury, and delicacy; all which are enemies to Science. So that the middle condition where there is a sufficient fortune to allow the necessary means for knowledge, and encourage a virtuous life, it being free from those temptations and inconveniencies which Riches and Poverty abound with, 'tis the most to be desired, and likeliest, as we generally see, to produce these happy effects.

Advertisement.

Published this day, an exact Copie of the Court and Chancery-books: Wherein the usual Abbreviations are explain'd, after a short and easy Method; and the whole so contriv'd, as to be cut into Copies for the use of Schools, or pasted into Pocket-Books for the improvement of young Clerks. Written by Charles Snell Writing-Master in Foster-Lane; who teacheth these, and all other useful Hands. Sold by John Place at Furnival's-Inn-Gate in Holborn: By Robert Vincent in Clifford's-Inn-Lane, near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street; And by other Stationers. Price 1 shilling.

A Catalogue of New Books
given Gratis; Printed
for John Dunton, who is re-
moved from the Poultry, to the
Raven in Jewen-street.

A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at St. Margaret's Westminster, on the thirtieth of January, 1693. By John Hartcliffe, B. D. Canon of Windsor. London: Printed for Charles Harper, at the Flower-de-luce over-against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street. 1695.

Such Persons as are willing to buy or sell Orphans money in the Chamber of London, may be furnished either to buy or sell within one per Cent, at Stephen Wilkinson's, at his house in Crown-Court, in Cheap-side, near Bow-Church, London. At any time in the day.

The unparallel'd Adventure, or one benefit in 7 Numbers certain, for 21000*l*. Ready money, wherein the Undertakers oblige themselves that any one who takes out 7 Numbers successively from 1 to 7, and from 7 to 14, and so to 21, 28, 35, &c. without the Intermission of any odd Number between, shall for every 7 Tickets so taken receive a Benefit, and for any Number under 7 he shall have his Chance of only 6 Blanks to a prize, which will be delivered out at 20*shill*. per Ticket. There being 3000 Benefits; the highest 1000*l*. the lowest 5*l*. It is design'd to be drawn the 26th. of February, 1695.

Tickets and Proposals may be had at Sir John Sweetapple's Knt. and Mr. Benjamin Hodgkins at the Black-amores head, Mr. Layfield at the White-horse, Mr. Tho. White at the Blew-Anchor, Lombard-street, Mr. Harrison at the Hen and Chickens, Mr. Ragdall at the Kings-head, Mr. Bullock at the Horse-shoe, Mr. Knott at the 3 Cocks in Cheap-side, Mr. Clement in New-gate-street, Mr. de Cayne without Bishops-gate, Mr. Minstai at the Golden-Paulson, Mr. Cole over-against St. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street, Mr. Foden at the 3 Flower-de-luces Fetter-lane-end Holbourn, Mr. Hamersley at the Mary Gold over-against Catherine-street, Mr. Roberts at the Green-Dragon, Mr. Bowman at the Flower-de-Luce, near the New Exchange in the Strand, Mr. Wootton at the Golden-Boy near Charing-Cross, Mr. Coleman over-against the King's Brew-house near the Hermitage, Goldsmiths. Mr. Lloyd Lombard-street, Mr. Sanders in Kings-street Guild-Hall. Mr. Houlcomb at the Bear in Holborn near Bloomsbury, Mr. Jonathan Milner in Popes-Head Alley over-against the Royal Exchange, Mr. James Brindley at the Corner of Fetter-lane Fleet-street.

The Third Monthly Double Chance having been drawn twice quite full, it is not doubted but it will be Drawn full the 11th instant.

Tickets may be had of Mr. Layfield at the White Horse in Lombard-street, Mr. Harrison at the Hen and Chickens, Mr. Ragdall at the Kings-Head, Mr. Nott at the Three Golden Cocks in Cheap-side, Mr. Clement at the George in Newgate-street, Mr. Cole over-against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street, Mr. Foden at the 3 Flower-de-luces at Fetter-lane end in Holbourn, Mr. Bowman at the Flower-de-luce near the New Exchange in the Strand, Mr. Coleman over-against the King's Brew-house in St. Catharines, Mr. Wilcock at the Dial in the Minories, Goldsmiths, Mr. Lloyd in Lombard-street, Mr. Sanders at the Carlisle in King's-street, near Guild-hall, Mr. Brindle at the corner of Fetter-lane in Fleet-street, Mr. Milner in Popes-head-Alley, near the Royal Exchange, Mr. Banes Merchant in the City of York, Mr. Mashburne mercer at Oxon, Mr. Gouge at the Castle, Westminster-hall.

Such Persons as are willing to Buy or Sell Blank or benefit Tickets in the Million Lottery, may have ready money for either, or be furnished with either, at the Mercury Office, at the Trinity-House in Finch-Lane, London, every day, from 1 a Clock to 4 in the Afternoon; Attendance being given those 3 hours only.